

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

This section provides a brief description of the conditions that exist on and near the Valle Verde project site.

4.1 PROJECT AREA SETTING

The Valle Verde Retirement Community (Valle Verde) is located in the southwestern portion of the City of Santa Barbara in the Hidden Valley neighborhood. The Hidden Valley neighborhood is predominantly built-out with single-family and duplex residential units, although open space areas are located in the southeast portion of the neighborhood, west of Veronica Springs Road. In addition to the Valle Verde facility, the Hidden Valley neighborhood includes several other public-serving facilities, such as the Vista del Monte retirement community; several churches; and the Hillside House, which is an intermediate care assisted living facility.

A variety of land uses are located adjacent to the Valle Verde project site. These land uses are described below and are depicted on Figure 4.1-1.

East: Calle de los Amigos is a public street that borders the project site to the east. Hidden Valley Park and Arroyo Burro Creek are located to the east of the roadway. Arroyo Burro Creek flows southward to the Arroyo Burro Lagoon, which empties to the ocean at Arroyo Burro Beach.

West: The Santa Barbara city limits extend along the northwest portion of the project site. Beyond the city limits is the unincorporated community of Hope Ranch. The Hidden Oaks residential community is located in the City of Santa Barbara and is adjacent to the southwestern portion of the project site. The Hidden Oaks community includes 11 single-family dwellings.

North: The Santa Barbara city limits extend along the northern boundary of the project site. Beyond the city limits is the La Cumbre County Club.

South: An open space hillside area is adjacent to the southern boundary of the project site. Residential uses located in the Campanil neighborhood of the City are located approximately 1,200 feet to the south of the project site.

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4.2 PROJECT SITE SETTING

4.2.1 Existing Buildings and Services

The Valle Verde project site consists of five separate Assessor Parcels and encompasses 59.75 acres. Approximately 38 acres of the project site have been developed with buildings, roadways and other facilities. The remainder of the project site is vacant.

Residential facilities provided by Valle Verde include 213 one- and two-bedroom apartments (independent living units);¹ 11 studio units;² a 45-room, 48-bed assisted living facility; a 36-room, 80 bed skilled nursing facility; and a six-bed Hospice facility. One additional single-family residence is also located on the Valle Verde campus. This residence is located in the southwestern portion of the campus on what is commonly referred to as the “Rutherford property.”

In addition to the residential facilities described above, other major buildings located on the campus include a 1,817 net square foot Administration Building; 11,647 net square foot Dining/Multi-Purpose Building; 4,348 net square foot Maintenance Building; 1,982 net square foot Salon/Staff Lounge; 1,203 net square foot recreation building; six gazebo structures and a two-unit/four room bed & breakfast for visitors. Existing buildings located on the Valle Verde campus are shown on Figure 4.2-1.

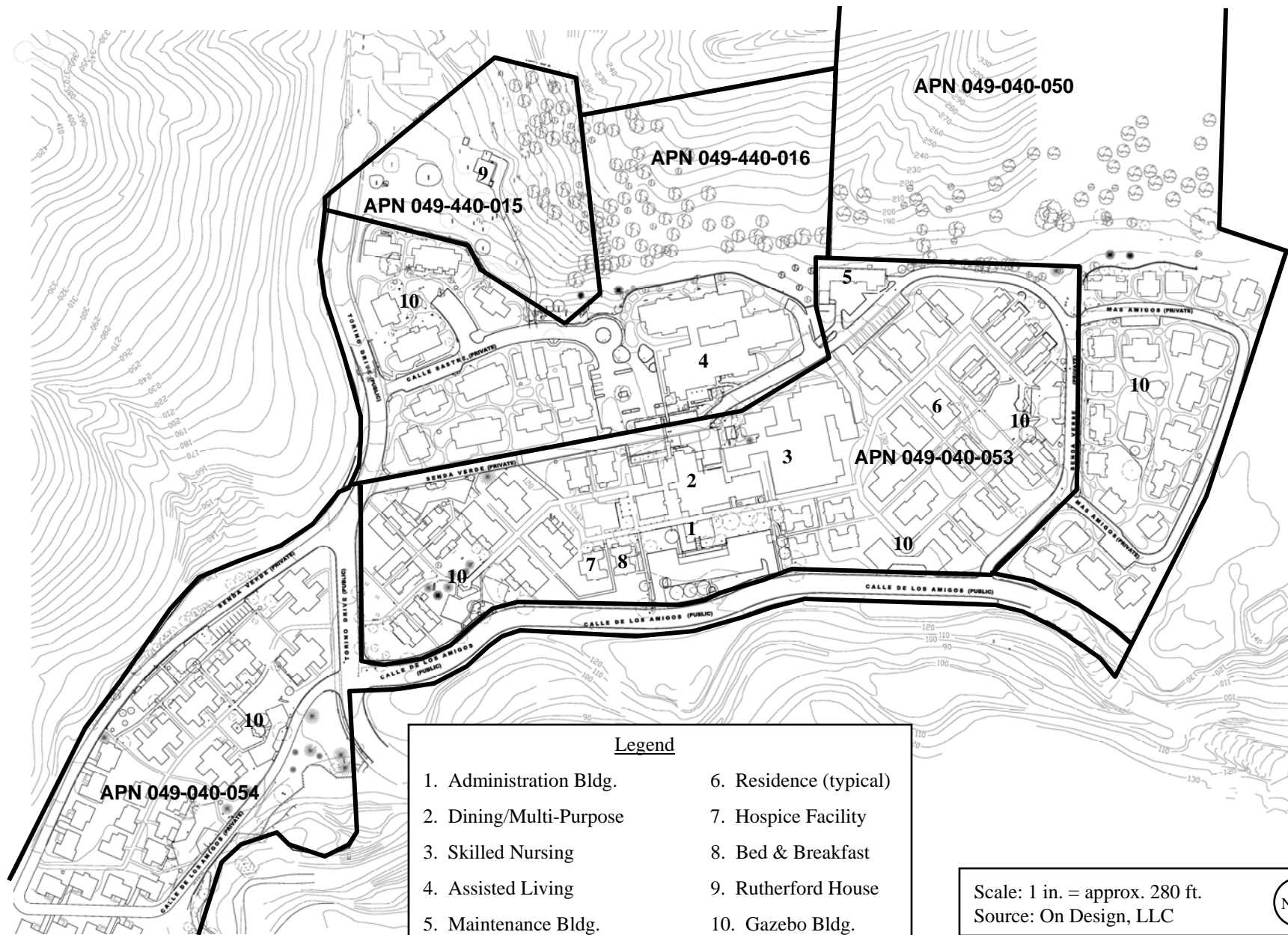
Services provided by Valle Verde for residents include meals, physical therapy, recreation, resident shuttle service, housekeeping and unit maintenance, and grounds keeping. Other facilities and services include laundry facilities, pool and fitness room, art studio, chapel, putting green, shuffleboard, wellness clinic, salon, thrift shop, country store, meeting space, a woodshop, and on-going cultural and educational programs.

4.2.2 Valle Verde Development History

A Conditional Use Permit (CUP) was approved for the Valle Verde Retirement Community on April 20, 1960 (Resolution 36). The CUP allowed the development of 182 independent care units and a 15-bed convalescent hospital (also referred to as a nursing care facility or “Skilled Nursing” facility). The CUP also required that the 45-acre Valle Verde project site be annexed into the City. The CUP specified that a maximum of 350 residents (including resident staff) could be located on the project site; provided a building height limitation of two-stories; and required adequate parking for residents, staff and visitors, with a provision that in no case should the parking provided be less than 90 spaces. The facility was constructed between 1965 and 1966.

¹ There are presently 99 one-bedroom units and 114 two-bedroom units provided on the project site.

² For land use and permitting purposes, the 11 studio units are not considered to be residential units because they do not provide private kitchen facilities.



A Variance was granted in 1971 to allow the addition of 16 resident rooms; a lounge and dining room; the addition of a day room to the existing nursing care facility; and to construct a 49-bed Personal Care Facility (also referred to as the “Assisted Living” facility). Construction of the facilities approved by the Variance was contingent upon the approval of a project site rezone. However, the rezone never occurred and the approved facilities were never constructed. In 1976, the 1971 project was re-approved, however, the 49-bed Personal Care Facility (Assisted Living) was not included. The 1976 approval increased the number of units on the project site to 182, with a total of 47 beds in the Skilled Nursing facility.

The Planning Commission approved the construction of 44 additional independent living dwelling units in 1981. This approval increased the total number of on-site units to 226. With the 47-bed Skilled Nursing facility, a total of 320 residents could be accommodated on the project site.

In 1984, approximately 11.77 acres were annexed to the City to facilitate an expansion of the facility. A CUP approved at the same time allowed the construction of a 28-unit apartment complex; a 45-room Assisted Living building with 48 beds; a 14-room Skilled Nursing building with 28 beds; a recreation building; a laundry/kiosk and five two-car carports; and additions to the existing central kitchen and dining area. With the implementation of this project, the Valle Verde campus provided a total of 254 independent living units; a 45-room, 48 bed assisted living facility; a 37-room, 75-bed skilled nursing facility; and other accessory buildings and uses.

In 1986, a 3.50-acre parcel referred to as the “Rutherford property” was annexed to the Valle Verde Retirement Community. This annexation occurred concurrent with the approval and annexation of the Hidden Oaks residential development, which is located adjacent to the southwest corner of the Valle Verde project site. Both the Rutherford and Hidden Oaks properties were annexed to the City because the Hidden Oaks project site was not contiguous to the city limits. By annexing both properties, the Hidden Oaks annexation did not result in the creation of an incorporated “island” surrounded by unincorporated properties. Also at this time, Torino Road was extended to its present location across the Rutherford property and dedicated to the City.

The Planning Commission approved the establishment of a six-bed Hospice facility on the Valle Verde campus in 1993. A building that contained four studio units was converted into the Hospice facility.

Since 1993, a number of changes have been approved at Valle Verde through the use of Substantial Conformance Determinations, which compared proposed changes to the facilities allowed by the CUP approved in 1984. Changes to the campus have included adding bathrooms to existing units; converting existing units to other uses such as a wellness clinic and archive storage; and combining small independent living units to create a single larger unit. Over time, these incremental changes have decreased the number of independent units provided on the project site from 254 to 213.

4.2.3 Valle Verde Residents and Staffing

In December, 2009, there were 356 residents at the Valle Verde facility. The residential population included 250 people living in 199 apartment units; 25 people living in 25 Assisted Living facility apartments; 15 people living in 15 Memory Support apartments; and 66 people living in 38 Skilled Nursing rooms. Also in December, 2009, there were 153 full-time equivalent employees at Valle Verde.

4.2.4 Access and Parking

Access. Regional access to the project area is provided by U.S. Highway 101, which is approximately one-half mile northeast of the project site. Access to U.S. 101 in the project area is provided by Los Positas Road (State Route 225) and at the Modoc Road/La Cumbre Road interchange. Access to the project can be achieved using a variety of roadways, however, the predominant access roads include Calle de los Amigos and Torino Drive. Major streets that provide access to Torino Drive include Modoc Road, Veronica Springs Road, and Palermo Drive (see Figure 3.2-1). A network of private roadways provides access throughout the project site.

Parking. There are 331 parking spaces distributed throughout the Valle Verde project site. The locations of existing parking spaces are depicted on Figure 4.2-2. Residents are allowed one car per licensed driver and are assigned an available parking space nearest their apartment at the time of their move-in. Each residence zone also has marked visitor parking spaces. There are approximately 20 on-site staff parking spaces located near the assisted living facility and the kitchen facility. Staff that do not park in on-site spaces park on public streets.

4.2.5 Topography and Vegetation

Topography. Portions of the Valle Verde project site that have been used for the development of residential units and other accessory uses are generally level. Hillside areas are located predominantly on the western portion of the project site, and include the area west of the Assisted Living building and the Maintenance building, and portions of the Rutherford property. The hillside that forms the western portion of the project site rises approximately 230 feet above the developed portion of the Valle Verde campus and separates the project site from the adjacent Hope Ranch community. Another steep hillside is located south of and adjacent to the project site. This hillside rises approximately 300 feet above the developed portion of the Valle Verde campus and separates the project site from the Campanil neighborhood to the south. Table 4.2-1 provides information regarding the average slope of the five Assessor Parcels that comprise the Valle Verde project site.



Scale: 1 in. = approx. 320 ft.
Source: On Design, LLC



Table 4.2-1
Valle Verde Project Site Average Slope Information

Assessor Parcel (1)	Area (acres)	Average Slope (percent)	Notes
049-440-015	3.50	20	This is the “Rutherford” parcel. Slopes on the northern half of the parcel exceed 20% gradient, while slopes on the southern portion are generally less than 20%.
049-440-016	10.77	19	This parcel includes relatively level areas developed with residential and accessory uses. This parcel also includes the hillside area on the western portion of the project site.
049-040-050	20.0	32	This parcel includes relatively level areas developed with residential and accessory uses. This parcel also includes the hillside area on the western portion of the project site.
049-040-053	14.08	3	This parcel includes relatively level areas developed with residential and accessory uses.
049-040-054	11.40	10	This parcel includes relatively level areas developed with residential uses and the sloping areas associated with Arroyo Burro Creek located along the eastern portion of the parcel.

(1) Please refer to Figure 4.2-1 for the location of individual Assessor Parcels

Vegetation. Vegetation on the developed portions of the Valle Verde campus is dominated by landscape plantings, however, 79 oak trees and two sycamore trees have been identified on or adjacent to development areas included as part of the proposed project. In total, 183 landscape and native trees have been identified on or near proposed development areas. Most of the oak trees located on or near proposed development areas are on the northern portion of the projects site and on the Rutherford parcel (refer to Figure 3.4-1). Proposed development locations on the western portion of the project site and on the Rutherford parcel also contain and/or are adjacent to areas that provide coastal sage scrub, oak woodland and non-native grassland habitat. The hillside that occupies the western portion of the project site also provides oak woodland, coastal sage scrub, and non-native grassland habitat areas. The hillside area located south of and adjacent to the project site is predominately covered with oak woodland and coastal sage scrub habitat. The area along Arroyo Burro Creek to the east of the project site supports riparian habitat.

4.2.6 Zoning and Land Use Designations

The Valle Verde facility has been designated for residential uses by the City’s Zoning Ordinance and General Plan. Table 4.2-2 depicts the zoning district classifications and General Plan land use designations for each of the five parcels that comprise the project site.

Table 4.2-2
Zoning and Land Use Designations

Assessor Parcel (1)	General Plan Land Use Designation	Zoning Classification
049-440-015	Residential, 1 unit/acre	"A-1" (One-Family Residence Zone)
049-440-016	Residential, 1 unit/acre	"A-1" and "E-3" (One-Family Residence Zones)
049-040-050	Residential, 5 units/acre	"A-1" and "E-3" (One-Family Residence Zones)
049-040-053	Residential, 5 units/acre	"E-3" (One-Family Residence Zone)
049-040-054	Residential, 5 units/acre	"E-3" (One-Family Residence Zone)

(1) Please refer to Figure 4.2-1 for the location of individual Assessor Parcels

4.3 CUMULATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Reasonably foreseeable development projects in the City of Santa Barbara and adjacent unincorporated areas were identified by reviewing project lists provided by the City of Santa Barbara. These lists were prepared in December, 2009, and include projects with new residential units and non-residential floor area. The projects on these lists are classified as "Pending" (currently in the environmental and planning review process); "Approved," "Building Permit Issued," or have recently received a certificate of occupancy. Many of the projects included on these lists are very small and as a result would not result in cumulatively considerable environmental impacts when considered along with the proposed Valle Verde project. Other projects identified on the lists are in locations far from the project site and as a result, would not substantially contribute to significant cumulative environmental impacts. The development projects included on the project lists that were substantial in size (i.e., five or more residential units, or more than 3,000 square feet of non-residential uses) and located within approximately one mile of the project site were identified as having the potential to contribute to significant cumulative environmental impacts. These projects are listed on Table 4.3-1, and the locations of the projects are shown on Figure 4.3-1.

**Table 4.3-1
Cumulative Development Projects Within Approximately One Mile of the Project Site**

Address	Map No. (1)	Case Number	Assessor Parcel No.	Project Type	Net New Residential Units	Proposed New Square Feet	Status
1235 Veronica Springs Road (Hillside House)	1	MST2003-00793	047-010-039	Annexation/Residential	125	---	Pending
15 S. Hope Ave.	2	MST2006-00682	051-040-058	Demolish 8,368 sq. ft. retail building. Construct new residences.	16	---	Pending
3714 State Street (Sandman)	3	MST2007-00591	053-300-023	Demolish 113-room hotel. Construct new mixed use project.	73	13,075 office 1,537 commercial	Approved
3757 State Street (Whole Foods)	4	MST2005-00156	051-040-046	Mixed Use (2)	15	72,209 commercial/retail (13,884 net new)	Pending
3820 State Street	5	MST2008-00358	057-240-052	Mixed Use	10	30,000 office	Pending
900-1100 Las Positas Road (Veronica Meadows)	6	MST99-00608	047-010-011, -016, -051, -053; 047-061-026	Residential	25	---	Approved
3885 State Street	7	MST2008-00180	051-022-012	Demolish 4,990 sq.ft. motel and 22,250 sq.ft. office. Construct new mixed use project.	30	2,605 commercial	Approved
3880 State Street	8	MST2006-00185	057-240-046	Mixed Use	8	4,289 commercial (1,733 net new)	Approved
4004 Via Lucero	9	MST2003-00084	057-210-028	Residential	10	---	C/O issued 6/30/09
4151 Foothill Road	10	MST2008-00496	059-160-017	Annexation and Commercial Office	---	69,259	Pending
101 S. La Cumbre	11	MST2008-00084	051-022-027	Demolish gas station. Construct new bank building.	---	3,332 (2,186 net new)	Pending
215 Pesetas Lane	12	MST90-02754	057-203-003	Medical clinic addition	---	36,000	Pending
1298 Las Positas Rd. (Elings Park)	13	MST2006-00509	047-010-034 and 049	Park additions	---	14,803 and other non-building facilities (i.e., sports fields)	Pending
540 W. Pueblo St.	14	MST2007-00092	025-090-046	Medical facility and residences	6	43,608	Pending

(1) Please Refer to Figure 4.3-1.

(2) The Whole Foods tenant improvements have been completed and the store is now occupied. However, the application for the proposed mixed use project has not been withdrawn and is still considered to be pending.

